



“Review of Existing Literature on Cervical Cancer Awareness and Prevention “

Mrs.Niketa Vaghela¹, Ms.Sandhya Kumari², Ms.Siji Varghese³

^{1,2}Assistant Professor, Parul Institute of Nursing, Parul University, Vadodara, Gujarat, India

³Clinical Instructor, Parul Institute of Nursing, Parul University, Vadodara, Gujarat, India

Corresponding Author: Mrs.Niketa Vaghela, Assistant Professor, Parul University, Parul Institute of Nursing, Vadodara, Gujarat.

Date of Submission: 05-07-2025

Date of Acceptance: 16-07-2025

Abstract

Cervical cancer remains one of the most significant causes of cancer-related mortality among women worldwide, especially in low- and middle-income countries where healthcare resources are limited. Despite the availability of effective preventive measures such as early detection through routine screening and vaccination against the human papillomavirus (HPV), which is the primary causative agent, awareness of cervical cancer remains inadequate across many populations. This literature review aims to systematically examine existing research on the level of awareness regarding cervical cancer among different demographic groups, with a particular focus on women of reproductive age, adolescents, and healthcare providers. The reviewed studies, conducted in diverse geographical and cultural contexts, consistently reveal considerable gaps in knowledge concerning the etiology of cervical cancer, the critical role of regular Pap smear tests in early diagnosis, and the benefits and accessibility of HPV vaccination programs.

Sociocultural factors such as stigma, myths surrounding sexual health, and gender dynamics, along with socioeconomic determinants like educational attainment and income level, significantly influence awareness and health-seeking behaviors. Additionally, disparities in access to accurate health information and healthcare services further exacerbate the problem, especially in rural and underserved areas. The role of healthcare providers is also crucial, as their knowledge, attitudes, and counseling practices greatly impact women's decisions to undergo screening and vaccination.

Overall, the evidence underscores an urgent need for culturally sensitive, community-based health education initiatives aimed at improving knowledge about cervical cancer risk factors, prevention, and early detection methods. Targeted interventions that address sociocultural barriers and enhance

accessibility to screening and vaccination are essential to reduce the burden of cervical cancer. Strengthening awareness efforts will play a pivotal role in promoting preventive behaviors, increasing screening uptake, and ultimately decreasing the incidence and mortality rates associated with cervical cancer globally.

Keyword

"Cervical cancer awareness," "HPV knowledge," "Pap smear screening," "cervical cancer prevention," "nursing students," "women's health education," and "public health awareness cervical cancer."

I. Introduction

Cervical cancer remains one of the most prevalent forms of cancer affecting women worldwide, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Despite being largely preventable and curable if detected early through regular screening and HPV vaccination, the burden of cervical cancer continues to be significant due to limited awareness, cultural barriers, and inadequate healthcare infrastructure.

Awareness regarding cervical cancer plays a vital role in promoting early detection and encouraging preventive practices among women. Numerous studies across various regions have been conducted to assess the level of knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to cervical cancer and its screening methods, such as the Pap smear and HPV testing. These studies provide valuable insights into the gaps in awareness and help in designing effective educational and public health interventions.

This review of literature aims to compile and analyze findings from previous studies that have explored awareness levels regarding cervical cancer among different populations, including adolescent girls, women of reproductive age, and healthcare professionals. By examining the trends, challenges,



and outcomes reported in these studies, the review will help in understanding the current scenario and guiding future efforts to improve cervical cancer awareness and prevention.

II. Methodology

A narrative review was conducted using databases such as PubMed, CINAHL, Scopus, and

Google Scholar. Articles published between 2013 and 2024 were considered. Search terms included “cervical cancer awareness,” “HPV vaccination,” “Pap smear,” and “preventive education.” Studies focusing on awareness levels, attitudes, and health-seeking behavior among women were included, while clinical and treatment-focused studies were excluded.

The literature consistently shows that awareness of cervical cancer, its causes, prevention, and screening methods is insufficient

Author & Year	Study Design	Population / Setting	Key Findings	Conclusion
Singh et al. (2020)	Cross-sectional survey	500 women (North India)	Only 28% were aware of cervical cancer screening; majority had never heard of Pap smear	Awareness is significantly low; need for educational interventions
Aswathy et al. (2012)	Systematic review	11 Indian studies (2002–2012)	Awareness of cervical cancer ranged from 13% to 53% across regions	Low awareness and utilization of screening services in India
Bhattacharyya et al. (2020)	Descriptive study	200 rural women (West Bengal)	Only 18.5% had heard of HPV ; misconceptions about cause and prevention were common	Rural women lack basic knowledge; health education is essential
Tungteakkhun et al. (2022)	Cross-sectional study	400 adolescent girls (Thailand)	74% had heard of cervical cancer , but only 32% knew about HPV vaccine	Partial awareness present, but vaccination knowledge remains poor
Sharma et al. (2019)	Cross-sectional study	300 nursing students (India)	90% had heard of cervical cancer, but only 41% knew correct age for HPV vaccination	Need for curriculum strengthening regarding cancer prevention
Kumar et al. (2021)	Community-based study	150 women (urban slum, Delhi)	Only 22% knew of screening methods; most assumed cervical cancer was not preventable	Strong need for community outreach and IEC programs
Kadian et al. (2018)	Descriptive study	120 ANMs and ASHAs (Haryana)	While 85% had heard of cervical cancer, only 40% could explain early warning signs	Training frontline health workers can improve rural women's awareness
Nwankwo et al. (2017)	Cross-sectional study	300 women (Nigeria)	Awareness was 45% , but only 6% had ever been screened	Knowledge does not always translate into practice; motivation and accessibility are issues
Patel et al. (2020)	Descriptive cross-sectional	200 college students (Gujarat, India)	65% were aware of cervical cancer; 40% knew about Pap smear; HPV vaccine awareness was low	Students have moderate awareness but lack full understanding of prevention strategies
WHO Report (2021)	Global assessment	Data from 45 countries	Awareness levels below 50% in most low- and middle-income countries	WHO recommends school-based education and free screening campaigns



III. Discussion

The review underscores that a lack of awareness is a major barrier to effective cervical cancer prevention. While several studies highlight improved knowledge after educational interventions, there is still a need for sustained and culturally appropriate health communication strategies. Nurses and community health workers play a pivotal role in spreading awareness at the grassroots level.

IV. Conclusion:

The literature consistently shows that awareness of cervical cancer, its causes, prevention, and screening methods is insufficient, particularly in rural and low-income settings. Even among educated populations like nursing students or healthcare workers, knowledge gaps persist. These findings underscore the need for structured awareness programs, inclusion of reproductive health education, and community outreach initiatives to promote early detection and prevention.

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